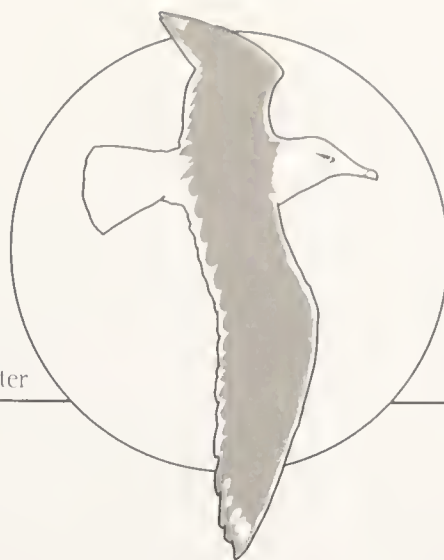


'The Gull



Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 81, No. 11 December 1999

JUL 24 2000

Significant Donations Made to Help Save the California Least Tern

by Arthur Feinstein, *Executive Director*

We are absolutely overwhelmed by the generosity of Afton Crooks and the Weeden brothers, Alan, John and William, who have each given GGAS donations of \$10,000 to help us with our efforts to save the endangered California Least Tern colony located at the soon-to-be Alameda National Wildlife Refuge located at the Alameda Naval Air Station. This significant \$20,000 contribution will not only assist in our efforts to save the terns but will also help in continuing our groundbreaking multicultural environmental education program.

Do we need this money? You bet! While we have been successful in convincing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create a National Wildlife Refuge at Alameda to protect the Least Tern colony, the colony still faces many threats.

A major threat facing the Terns is the lack of security. Right now the Tern colony is separated from the six million human inhabitants of the Bay Area by a ridiculously low three to six foot high fence. That's it. We have seen people lift their bicycles over the fence and go off riding around the Refuge. Last year between seventy and one hundred cars drove through the fence to watch a San Francisco fireworks display during the Least Tern nesting season. The Least Tern

Monitor (an endangered species specialist who watches over the colony) reports many instances of people intruding onto the Refuge during the Terns' breeding season.

Since Least Terns nest right on the ground they are very susceptible to disturbance. If people walk by close to the nest, the Terns may fly off the nests and leave their eggs or young chicks exposed to the cold Bay Area night air. Many chicks die each year from such exposure to the cold. People may even have taken Tern eggs from the nests. In any case, last year's breeding season was one of the least successful in years and much of this may be attributed to people disturbing or otherwise impacting the Terns.

Unfortunately, the Refuge site still belongs to the Navy. But the Navy is essentially gone from Alameda and they want nothing more to do with the colony. The Fish and Wildlife Service does not yet own the land and so they say they can not do anything (the two agencies are arguing over responsibility for toxic cleanup on the site and so the exchange of land from Navy to Service goes unfulfilled). The Terns are caught in the middle and face an April 2000 breeding season with no protection whatsoever.

As you can see there is a great need

Continued on page 12



Field Trips Calendar

GAS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 5, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

See January 2nd trip for details. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 5, U.C. BOTANICAL GARDENS, BERKELEY.

See November Gull for details. Leader: Lillian Fujii (510) 236-4167, steveandlil@worldnet.att.net. \$ (parking and entrance fee)

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 8, MINI-TRIP TO LAKE MERRIT, OAKLAND.

See November Gull for details. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 & 12, GRAY LODGE AND SACRAMENTO WILDLIFE REFUGES.

See November Gull for details. Leaders: Steve and Renee Margolin. (530) 342-6476.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 12, BERKELEY AQUATIC PARK

See November Gull for details.

Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936, rscalf@jps.net.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 19, OAKLAND CBC.

Tuesday December 28, San Francisco Cbc.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30, CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT WRAP-UP!

Meet at Merrie Way above the Cliff House at 8:00 a.m. We will look for highlights found, as well as species missed, on the San Francisco Christmas Bird Count. Bring lunch and liquids. We will bird until about 3:00 p.m. The itinerary will be determined at the last minute. Carpooling would be helpful. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. E-mail: ash@sfo.com (*)

SUNDAY JANUARY 2, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular 1st Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

SATURDAY JANUARY 8, PALO ALTO BAYLANDS.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. Take Hwy. 101 south to Palo Alto; exit at Embarcadero and drive east toward the airport and the Baylands Nature Center. Continue

beyond the airport to the duck pond (on the left) and park at the east end. Bring lunch, scope and clothes appropriate for rain and mud. We should see waterfowl, rails and shorebirds. Trip will end about mid-afternoon. Beginners welcome. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074. E-mail: murphsf@worldnet.att.net (*)

SUNDAY JANUARY 9, CRISSY FIELD, SAN FRANCISCO.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at the eastern end of Crissy Field. Be among the first people to bird this exciting new wetland. As of writing the first shorebirds and ducks have begun to use this area that a year ago was a parking lot. We will look for shorebirds and ducks as we walk around the wetland, and watch loons and grebes in the bay. This half day trip will be great for beginners. To reach Crissy Field take Van Ness St. (101 north), turn left onto Bay St., and then turn right onto Laguna St. Laguna St. becomes Marina Blvd. Continue along Marina and from the right lane go straight into the Presidio onto Mason St., look for the parking area on the right. Leader Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. E-mail: ash@sfo.com

SATURDAY JANUARY 15, SANDHILL CRANES.

California's most elegant dancers! If you enjoy bitter cold, dense fog and haunting bird sounds, this is your trip. Over 75 species in recent years, including Common Snipe, Tundra Swan,

GGAS Calendar

Quail Habitat Planting

Saturday, December 11, 1999

Contact: Alan Hopkins,

415-664-0983

ash@sfo.com

Christmas Bird Counts

Oakland: Sunday,

December 19

San Francisco: Tuesday,

December 28

FAWR Winter Bird Class

Begins on Wednesday,

January 19

College of Alameda

and ANWF

FAWR Spring Bird Class

Begins on Wednesday,

March 14

College of Alameda

and ANWF

Panama Field Trip

March 18- 26, 2000

Contact: Steve Margolian,

530-342-6476

White-faced Ibis, Ferruginous Hawk, and Loggerhead Shrike. Dress for cold. Bring lunch and drinks for this trip to the Delta. Call leader Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229 for reservations.

Plan Ahead: 1) Sunday, January 23, San Leandro Reservoir w/ Bob Lewis.

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with a (*). Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger (even if a trip is not marked with an (*), if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Lillian Fujii (510) 256-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.

Happy Y2K and Thank You to Our Field Trip Leaders

As we approach the end of one millennium and the beginning of another, I reflect upon the contributions that the Golden Gate Audubon Society has made towards protecting our feathered friends and their fragile habitats. During my brief tenure as Field Trip Committee Chair, I have witnessed the establishment of a refuge for the Least Tern, the development of an incredible Least Tern program for our schools, the creation of the new wetlands area at Arrowhead Marsh (the fruits of years of litigation), the withdrawal of the Gateway Project, and much more.

All that GGAS has done is due to our large and committed membership. Many of us are not active birders, but many of us are. I cannot imagine being a birder and not caring about the welfare of birds and the environment. We may not be able to do as much as we would like, but we do what we can (life is tough for humans too, and most of us just want to have fun), and every voice, even a whisper, helps the cause.



Being a beginning birder can be oh, so difficult, and by leading trips, our wonderful field trips leaders have nurtured so many, as well offered quality experiences and learning opportunities to those who are more experienced. By sharing their time and knowledge, our leaders have contributed immeasurably to the strength and success of our chapter.

The following have led trips for GGAS since January 1998.

Leon Abrams, Ken Ackerman, Peter Allen, Stefanie Arthur, George Bing, Bill Bixby, Jeffrey Black, Ken Burton, Chris Carpenter, Lewis Cooper, Hugh Cotter, Mark Eaton, Graham Etherington, Anthony Fisher, Harry Fuller, David George, Bob Hogan, Alan Hopkins, Robin Leong, Bob Lewis, Ron Lindeman, Renee Margolin, Steve Margolin, Gloria Markowitz, Jennifer Matkin, Helen McKenna, Dan Murphy, Joan Murphy, George Peyton, Lina Prairie, Robin Pulich, Cathy Purchis, Dave Quady, David Rice, Allan Ridley, Jim Rowoth, Rusty Scalf, Don Schmoldt, Jean-Marie Spoelman, Malcolm Sproul, Don Starks, Anna Wilcox, and Joan Zawaski.

We thank you all, and wish you peace, health and happy birding in Y2K.

Lillian Fujii

Editor's Note: We also want to thank Lillian Fujii, the Chairperson of our Field Trips Committee, for the outstanding job she continues to do each year in planning and coordinating our unparalleled field trips.



Some October Field Observations From My Deck

Being laid up for nearly three months resulted in a forced "vacation" at home, curtailing field observations and honing my backyard birding skills. I noticed the change of seasons with summer residents leaving and winter birds returning. And I became aware of bird behavior rather than zeroing in on birds' field marks. e.g. certain birds bathe at very definite times while other birds spend much more time on their ablutions than the ones who barely have time to zip in and out of the fountain or bird bath. Just as human individuals vary, so do feathered varieties exhibit specific characteristics.

While enjoying the warmth of the October days, I would read or eat lunch on the deck, surrounded by various types of feeders attracting a throng of hungry birds. For several days I was aware of a tremendous number of bird tweets and buzzes high in our huge pine tree. I assumed from the sounds that the birds were Pine siskins and Goldfinches but I didn't check them out with my binoculars. (When you are on crutches you think long and hard about whether "this trip is necessary.") The noisy flock always began their socializing at about the same time of day.

One day I thought ahead before I sat down, and slung my binoculars around my neck just in case the bird party started up again. Sure enough, the low-key din began but, strangely, I couldn't see any movement with my naked eyes. Where were those little guys? Imagine my surprise when, with magnification, I spotted an assortment of birds: goldfinches and siskins along with chickadees, a few nuthatches, and several warbler species. All were hard at work having a feast of some

kind—not moving too much, just plucking delicacies from the needles. Naturally, the warblers were clever at keeping themselves partially hidden so that my neck and arms were killing me. It appeared that there were mostly Yellow-rumped, a few Townsend's and some who refused to show themselves for identification.

Wintertime is normally the prime time for mixed flocks of birds to congregate for foraging. Chickadees appear to be the leaders of the band. They are so boisterous that they attract fellow bug eaters like titmouse's, bush tits, kinglets, and nuthatches on cold, wintry days. On this lazy fall day, there must have been an abundance of a specific insect that the resident birds had discovered. And who can say what those seed-eating finches were eating? I know that birds are good at exploiting food sources; that is one of the advantages of flocking. After a week, they had gone elsewhere.

Watching birds while they forage for food is very entertaining. Think of the various techniques employed by various birds. The Black Phoebe is as artful at catching insects in the air as any bird you could find. Equally adept at aerial hunting are the swallow families who open wide to engulf a meal of "plankton of the air." Acrobatic chickadees and bushtits often dine upside down, as do nuthatches. Different warbler species use various techniques—some fly-catch while others glean insects from leaves. But in true warbler fashion, all of them are on the move almost constantly in their quest for protein.

The ground-feeding species are equally diverse. Observe the energy required by the Spotted Towhee

and the Fox Sparrow as they attack the ground furiously with both feet at once, uncovering delectable worms, grubs and insects. Thrashers use their long, scythe-like bills to probe the ground. Thrushes scurry along the ground, stopping to look and listen for food. Meadowlarks stroll the fields, heads bobbing, before stabbing prey with sharp bills. Some birds lift leaves or stones to discover food. Others hover before dropping down upon something tasty.

Despite study, it's downright challenging to gather complete information on what each bird species ingests. In days gone by, studying the contents of a dead bird's stomach revealed much about that individual bird. Killing birds for such a study just isn't done anymore. Besides, species eat different diets depending upon what food is available in its particular environment. So, scientists generalize. Among birds which regurgitate pellets, like owls, diets are easier to study. Examining their castings divulges what has been ingested and this can be documented. More difficult, for example, are the shorebirds, which eat worms. No one can know for sure just which type of worm that bird is gobbling. Or, without being a bird on a branch next to a nuthatch, we can merely guess at what morsel he is devouring.

The next time you see a hungry bird searching for food, stop for a moment to watch and take note of what that specific bird is doing and how he's doing it. In the long run, it's the little things that make bird watching such a satisfying hobby. There's always something new to be learned. }

They Came By Sea

by Harry Fuller

British Return

Two British expeditions to the Pacific produced very different results. Captain George Vancouver (1758–1798) had served in Captain Cook's second and third Pacific expeditions. He'd been in the Royal Navy since he was 13 years old, so he was a veteran naval explorer by the beginning of his expedition in 1791. His chief naturalist was Dr. Archibald Menzies (1754–1842) who was older than Vancouver and would survive his former captain by decades.

Vancouver was to explore and map the western coast of North America. Menzies was to collect specimens of plants and animals. Vancouver drew maps and charts that were considered standard for over a century. He proved forever that there was no northwest passage in a moderate latitude. He left his name on the landscape. He did NOT live long enough to finish the official account of his voyage. It was finished by his brother and Captain Puget and included little information gathered by Menzies.

During the voyage, 1794–1798, the chief surgeon died. Dr. Menzies, a trained and experienced doctor, was ordered to take over the medical duties. Menzies was more interested in the plants he was finding. He balked at medical duties, apparently coming close to mutinous behavior, and was under arrest when the ships returned to London. Menzies was nearly court-martialed. Powerful friends interceded, Dr. Menzies later flourished, becoming a successful doctor and friend of many

plant collectors and botanists of his time. He was the first European to collect the California Redwood but never published a description. Other plants he collected were described by others and three were named for Menzies, including *Psuedotsuga menziesii* (Douglas-fir) and *Arbutus menziesii* (coast madrone). Most of his journal from the trip was never published and none of his bird notes or any specimens he may have collected were ever used by science.

A later British expedition, under Captain Frederick Beechey, produced some key ornithological findings. From 1825–8, Beechey and his ship, *H.M.S. Blossom*, sailed the coast from Chile to Alaska. His naturalist was Dr. Alexander Collie (1793–1835). This expedition spent considerable time ashore in Mexican California, both in Monterey and San Francisco. The ship was anchored in San Francisco Bay, November 7–December 28, 1826, then returned for two weeks exactly a year later.

Collie collected many specimens which were not in good shape when they got back to England, but he made several fine colored drawings of birds he thought were new, and took notes. From these British ornithologist Nicholas A. Vigors contributed a chapter on ornithology in the *Zoology of Captain Beechey's Voyage*, 1839. Vigors named several species new to science, including several taken in California: Band-tailed Pigeon, Western Bluebird, Black Phoebe, American Avocet, Black Turnstone, Pygmy Nuthatch, Bewick's Wren, California Towhee.

Vigors notes that Collie collect-

ed some birds in San Francisco: Red-winged Blackbird, Kingfisher, American Avocet and a Least Bittern "shot on the margin of a streamlet of water surrounded by low shrubs."

In Monterey Collie collected: Band-tailed Pigeons, "Sooty" (probably Black-footed) Albatross, Semipalmated Plover, Scrub Jays, Hairy Woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Pygmy Nuthatches, American Robins and California Quail that survived to live in the London Zoo. Somewhere off Alaska they took the type specimen of the Kizil's Murrelet. In Mexico Collie collected a new long-tailed Corvid, the Black-throated Magpie-Jay (*Calocitta collicii*), the discoverer's namesake.

Collie also collected the California Ground Squirrel named for his captain, *Spermophilus beecheyi*. Beechey himself eventually rose to rear admiral and served as president of the Royal Geographical society. Dr. Collie went to Perth as a colonial administrator where he sickened and died before Vigors' work was published. A town in Australia was named for Collie.

Vigors had a productive career as an arm-chair ornithologist and befriended a romantic-looking French-American publishing a book on North American birds. In return Audubon named a bird for his friend, the Vigors' Warbler. The bird turned out to be an immature Pine Warbler and so the name died.

The next serious exploration of California flora and fauna was done first by David Douglas, then by Thomas Nuttall, on foot.

Gateway Valley Project Challenged by New Study on Golf Courses

by Arthur Feinstein

One of the saddest of recent trends in habitat destruction has been the proliferation of golf courses. Every new housing project seems to come with an attached golf course. Golf courses take up lots of room, an added 100 to 300 acres for any project, and they necessarily entail the destruction of our native habitats as they are constructed.

Some proponents like to say that a golf course is better than concrete and so we should be view happy. Well, it may be better than having the land paved over but only marginally.

A recent study at Stanford showed, not surprisingly, that as golf courses replaced oak woodlands, the native woodland avian species suffered. Although golf courses may have trees, there are many avian species that require dense stands of trees, not the fringe of woods that one sees in golf courses. Of 21 bird species found in the oak woodland, only twelve were to be found on the golf course. Species that disappeared included the Hutton's Vireo, Stellar's Jay, Western Wood-Pewee, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wrentit, Dark-eyed Junco, Cliff Swallow and Bewick's Wren. One can assume similar kinds of impacts when other habitats are displaced by golf courses.

Thus, when we see a housing development and a golf course proposed in tandem we know that

we are going to lose hundreds more acres of habitat than if it were only housing that was proposed, and that significant impacts to avian species will take place.

Such a case is Gateway Valley in Orinda. We have been fighting to preserve this wonderful valley for over ten years. This 1000-acre valley is rich in water, a rare commodity in the East Bay hills. Over 5 miles of year-round streams traverse the valley surrounded by mature oaks and bay trees. Many acres of rare wetland seeps and pools can be found on the hill-sides. Over 70 species of birds, over 30 species of which breed in the valley, can be found here. The threatened Red-legged frog has its home here as do other species of special concern. The valley has never been developed although it has been grazed (as has just about all of California).

If you want a golf course you need fairly flat terrain. So the Gateway project entails quite a bit of filling of the valley and, in general, a pretty complete destruction of the habitat. So why a golf course? Without it, the residential project could be reduced to a much smaller size and have much less impact on the creeks and wetlands.

Well, as we reported previously in the **Gull**, about a year ago we were blessed by an anonymous \$20,000 donation to be used to protect our riparian (streamside) habitats for our songbird populations. There are few riparian



habitats as valuable as those in Gateway Valley. We decided to use part of that donation to determine whether the developers of the Gateway Valley project

really needed a golf course in order to generate the financial return they claim they need.

We hired Natural Resource Associates, a firm well known for their analysis of the economics of projects that impact natural resources, to undertake this analysis. Their completed study demonstrates that a golf course is not necessary for the financial success of a residential project in Gateway Valley.

The Natural Resource Associates study analyzed over 200,000 houses in Dallas, Texas and analyzed the impact of having an adjacent golf course on the price of the house versus the presence of a park or other natural area (all other factors were taken into consideration and compensated for). The conclusion was that people were willing to pay more for open space and parks than they were for golf courses. Interviews with real estate agents in the Bay Area confirmed this result. The obvious conclusion is that a project in Gateway Valley does not need to have a golf course in order to be financially successful. Thus hundreds of acres of habitat can be spared from destruction.

With this study we can now approach the agencies that must give the developer permit approval before the project can proceed and argue that if a project is to be approved, it must be a project without a golf course. This will save hundreds of acres

of habitat. Under the Clean Water Act (and the developer must get a permit under this Act) there is a strong argument to be made that a permit can not be approved unless the golf course is removed from the project. Our study reinforces and supports this position.

And best of all, we will have the opportunity to advance this position in the future. This is because, thanks to the hard work of GGAS and the many hard-working people of Orinda who joined us in opposing this project, the applicant has withdrawn its permit application for this project from both of the agencies which must approve it, the Army Corps of Engineers and The SF Regional Water Quality Control Board. When it applies again, and it will, we will be able to make a strong argument that if any project is approved, it must be one that saves the maximum amount of habitat by eliminating the golf course component of the project.

We would, of course, prefer to see no project at all in Gateway Valley and will continue to advocate for that result. If an upcoming Park Bond Act passes in the Spring we would hope to convince East Bay Regional Park to attempt to use that money to purchase Gateway Valley for inclusion into the East Bay Regional Park District.

If you would like to join our efforts in opposing the destruction of Gateway Valley please give us a call at 510-843-2222. }

December Donations

Golden Eagle

(\$1,000 or more)

David W. Hudson

Least Tern

(\$200 or more)

Jean and Ernest Lucken

Gifts (under \$100)

Janet S. Jacobsen and
Alice Weber

Save the Quail:

Diane E. Wilson and
Harriet L. Fraser.

Birds or Honor:

For the White-winged Tern
seen at the Moonglow Dairy,
September 15, 1999,
Alan Hopkins.

In Memoriam:

Sally and Bill Lowery in
memory of Elaine Nelson.

The Society Welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary. }



September 28 – October 28, 1999

The fall migration continued unabated through a period of variable weather that included coastal fog, hot dry winds, our first significant rainfall, and heavy surf late in the month. Thousands of shorebirds graced coastal wetlands, and reports of unusual migrant warblers totaled 275, about three-quarters of the number seen during the last period. The 13 review species were about two-thirds of last month's total.

Albatross to Boobies

Pelagic outings had many good finds during the interval. The **Shy Albatross** (*Thalassarche cauta*) found in Aug. and Sept. in MEN waters was seen again at Bodega Canyon (fide DN), Oct. 4. October was also a good month for Laysan Albatross sightings, with two found on a Bodega Canyon/Cordell Bank pelagic trip Oct. 1, one each on Oct. 16 and Oct. 23–24 Monterey outings, and 5 on an Oct. 25 trip to the Cordell Banks (DLSh). The best numbers of Black-footed Albatross were 95 on a Sept. 30 Bodega Canyon trip (DN), and 87 on the aforementioned Bodega Canyon/Cordell Bank outing (DLSh).

High count for Northern Fulmars was 780 on the Oct. 25 Cordell Bank trip (DLSh). Pink-footed Shearwaters numbered 257 on Bodega Canyon/Cordell Bank PT Oct. 1 (DLSh), and 464 on the Oct. 16 MTY PT (DLSh), which also reported the most Flesh-footed Shearwaters (8) of any pelagic outings. A single Short-

tailed Shearwater was seen on the Oct. 16 MTY PT (DLSh), and there were two at the Cordell Banks on Oct. 25 (DLSh). A total of 5 reports of **Manx Shearwaters** (*Puffinus puffinus*) came in, with one off Pigeon Point, SM, Oct. 2 (AJ), two on a MTY PT Oct. 9 (TM), one on a MTY PT Oct. 16 (DLSh), and another on the MTY PT Oct. 23–24 (DLSh). Single Wilson's Storm-Petrels were seen on SCZ PT Oct. 4 (CK), and on the Oct. 10 MTY (TM, MPRBA). The Oct. 2 pelagic outing in SCZ waters reported 2 or 3 Least Storm-Petrels, whereas there were 3 or 4 on a similar outing Oct. 3 (CK). An adult male **Brown Booby** (*Sula leucogaster*) of the *Brewsteri* race was on the Farallones ~Oct. 1–3, and the same one was seen again ~Oct. 16–18 (PRBO). Another or possibly the same bird was photographed in SCZ waters on the Oct. 20 PT and this sighting may be a 2nd county record (JB). This species is a rare and irregular late summer and fall post-breeding visitor (Small, 1994) that has been seen in N. California waters several times in recent years.



Geese to Ruffs

The report period had a large influx of Greater White-fronted Geese on the coast, with hundreds of them reported at coastal locations from HUM to MTY, including 320 in SCZ county on Oct. 7 (DSu). There were scattered reports of Eurasian Wigeons, with one in Arcata, HUM, Sept. 30–Oct. 4 (Fix, Harris), 3 at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN, Oct. 11 (PS), and single birds at Pine Gulch Creek, Bolinas, MRN, Oct. 17 (JMa), Charleston Slough, SCL, Oct. 20 (MD), and Lloyd Lake, GGP, SE, Oct. 28 (KHe). By far the most unusual duck was a **Garganey** (*Anas querquedula*) found on Rodman Slough, LAK, near Nice, Oct. 16–22 (RS fide JW, DM). This species is an Old World teal that regularly migrates to Alaska and is a very rare visitor to California. Eight Harlequin Ducks were found at their usual spot at Glass Beach, MEN, Oct. 14 (DT), and the only Hooded Merganser reports were one in Marin City, MRN, Oct. 22 (DM), and a pair in Corralitos Lagoon, SCZ, Oct. 28 (DSu). An unusual location for a Swainson's Hawk was at Odello Lagoon, Carmel R., MTY, Oct. 23–24 (BH), and observations of nine individual Rough-legged Hawks came from HUM, MRN, and SM counties. A Sandhill Crane was found in an uncommon coastal location at Calero Creek, SM, Oct. 22–25 (FT, AE, CL).

Pluvialis species were recorded in several places, with single American Golden-Plovers at

Moonglow Dairy, MTY, Oct. 2 (JMo), the city of Davis Wetlands, YOL, Oct. 11-14 (SH, JH), the North Beach Turnoff, PRNS, MRN, Oct. 14-15 (SH, GF), and at Schoellenberger Park, SON, Oct. 12-15 (CC, LH), whereas Pacific Golden-Plovers were more common, with at least 20 reported over HUM, MRN, MTY, SM, and SON counties. Two Mountain Plovers were observed at the North Beach Turnoff, PRNS, MRN, Oct. 14 (SH). Individual Baird's Sandpipers were at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 28 (TEL), Tyee City, HUM, Oct. 2 (N), as well as in DN county Oct. 2 (Hu). More than 30 Pectoral Sandpipers were seen over DN, HUM and PLA counties. Single Stilt Sandpipers were spotted at the pond at State & Spreckles, Alviso, SCL, Oct. 2, at the city of Davis Wetlands, YOL, Oct. 11 (SH), and at Charleston Slough, SCL, Oct. 26 (RH). There was a Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Big Lagoon, HUM, Sept. 28 (Hw). Three Ruffs were reported: at the city of Davis Wetlands, YOL, Oct. 10-14 (SH), at Spanish Bay, MTY, Oct. 16-19 (ST, JDo), and at Arcata, HUM, Oct. 15 (P).

Skuas to Murres

South Polar Skuas were sighted on 7 pelagic outings, with as many as 15 on an Oct. 4 trip in SCZ waters (CK). There were two Franklin's Gulls in MTY county, first at Elkhorn Slough, Oct. 3 (JMo) and then possibly the same birds at Moonglow Dairy Oct. 9-15 (MPRBA). Single Franklin's Gulls were found at Palo Alto

Baylands, SCL, Oct. 3 (JMa) and in DN county Oct. 22 (B). A Thayer's Gull was identified on the Farallones~Oct. 1-3 (PRBO). "Our" **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*) returned for the 5th winter to Alviso, SCL, Oct. 16 (SR). The **White-winged Tern** (*Chlidonias leucopterus*), present since August, continued at Moonglow Dairy, MTY, up until at least Oct. 16 (DA, CM, MOB). Three Black Skimmers were at Rio Del Mar Beach, SCZ, Oct. 14 (DSu), and 11 were again seen at Charleston Slough, SCL, Oct. 25 (MR). A **Thick-billed Murre** (*Uria lomvia*) found on a pelagic outing in SCZ waters Oct. 4 was said to be a 2nd co. record. (BM). Another or possible the same **Thick-billed Murre** with worn alternate-plumage was seen on Oct. 17, one mile off the lighthouse in SCZ waters (DLSH). This alcid is a resident of the higher latitudes of both Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and is a very rare and irregular fall and winter visitor (Small, 1994).

Doves to Thrushes

A White-winged Dove was found in La Selva, SCZ, Oct. 1 (DSu), and a second one was seen in DN county Oct. 16 (B). A Common Ground-Dove (heard only) at Turlock, STA, Oct. 19th would be a 1st county record if confirmed (MBS). A Red-naped Sapsucker was discovered at Sibley Volcanic RP, CC, Oct. 19 (KA). The only Willow Flycatcher report came from the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, Oct. 3 (LC), and an

Abbreviations for Observers: JA, Jean Adams; AASBC, Albany Adult School Birding Class; KA, Ken Archibaud; DA, Dick Ashford; B, Barron; FB, Florence Bennett; EB, Ellen Blustein; JB, Jim Booker; JBr, Jean Brant; KB, Ken Burton; LC, Luke Cole; CC, Chris Corben; CCu, Cindy Cummings; JD, Jeff Davis; MD, Matthew Dodder; JDo, Judy Donaldson; TE, Todd Easterla; ME, Eaton Mark; AE, Al Eisner; EE, Elias Elias; TEL, Ted Elliott; GF, George Finger; F, Fix; Fr, Freeman; TG, Tom Gardali; PG, Phil Gordon; SH, Steve Hampton; KH, Keith Hansen; H, Harris; Ha, Hazard; KJc, Kristi Hein; He, Herrera; Hw, Hewett; BH, Bill Hill; KH, Kevin Hintsa; ASH, Alan S. Hopkins; LH, Lisa Hug; JH, Joan Humphrey; Hu, Hunter; RH, Ralph Hunter; I, Irwin; AJ, Al Jaramillo; CK, Clay Kempf; AK, Anna Kopitov; BL, Bob Lewis; CL, Calvin Lou; MOB, Many Observers; JMa, John Mariani; JMt, Jennifer Matkin; TM, Todd McGrath; BM, Bert McKee; DM, Dave McKenzie; CM, Carol Miller; SM, Steven Mlodinow; M, Moore; JMo, Joe Morlan; N, Nelson; OU, Observer Unknown; DN, Dan Nelson; P, Palugi; MP, Mike Parmeter; BR, Bob Reiling; DR, Don Roberson; MR, Mike Rogers; GR, Gary Rosenberg; SR, Steve Rottenborn; R, Rovelli; PS, Paul Saraceni; RSc, Rusty Scalf; DS, Don Schmoltd; DLSH, Debra Love Shearwater; S, Sooter; RS, Rich Stallcup; MBS, Mary Beth Stowe; ES, Emily Strauss; DSu, David Suddjian; KS, Kirk Swenson; ST, Simon Thompson; RT, Ron Thorn; DT, Dodothy Tobkin; FI, Francis Toldi; W, Wachs; JW, Jerry White; AW, Adam Winer; AWO, Alan Wollchuck

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; BSOL, Big Sur Ornithology Lab; CC, Contra Costa; DN, Del Norte; ED, El Dorado; GGP, Golden Gate Park; HUM, Humboldt; LAK, Lake; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MON, Mono; MTY, Monterey; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; PT, Pelagic Trip; PLA, Placer; PRBO, Point Reyes Bird Observatory; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; RP, Regional Park; SBT, San Benito; SF, San Francisco; SJ, San Joaquin; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SON, Sonoma; STA, Stanislaus; SP, State Park; TRI, Trinity; YOL, Yolo

Eastern Phoebe was at Fairhaven, HUM, Oct. 23 (W). At least 13 Tropical Kingbirds were reported over HUM, MRN, MTY, SF, SM, and SON counties. Four to five Cassin's Kingbirds were seen at Paicines Reservoir, SBT, Oct. 10 (PG), and another was at Manresa State Beach, SCZ, Oct. 28 (DSu). One Eastern Kingbird was reported from Big Sur, MTY, Sept. 30 (MPRBA), and a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was found at Samoa, HUM, Oct. 15-18 (EE, H, MOB).

Vireo reports were especially numerous. A **Yellow-throated Vireo** (*Vireo flavifrons*) was identified at the Carmel R., MTY, Oct. 16-25 (DR, AE, MOB). This

Continued next page

bird resides in the Eastern U.S., and is an extremely rare fall transient in coastal central CA (Small, 1994). Another of that species was found at BSOL in late July and remained there through most of the fall. Two Plumbeous Vireos were reported: one at Rancho del Oso, SCZ, Oct. 1 (DSu) and the other at Inverness, MRN, Oct. 16 (KH). The **Philadelphia Vireo** (*Vireo philadelphicus*) first reported Sept. 25 continued at North Lake, GGP, SF, through at least Oct. 21 (AWo, LC, MOB). During the period, four other reports of this rare vagrant from Canada occurred (one more than last month!), as follows: at the Carmel R. mouth, MTY, Sept. 29–Oct. 3 (MPRBA), banded at BSOL, MTY, Sept. 29–Oct. 18 (MPRBA), at Five Brooks Pond, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 29 (RS), and near Pine Gulch Creek, Bolinas, MRN, Oct. 17 (fide JMa). Single Red-eyed Vireos were seen at the Carmel R., MTY, Sept. 28–Oct. 3 (GR, MPRBA), at Fairhaven, HUM, Oct. 6 (I), and at the Big Sur R., MTY, Oct. 8 (SM).

Reports of Rock Wrens came from uncommon locations, with two near Rockaway Beach, SM, Oct. 18, probably present since late September (JMo, MOB). Another Rock Wren was found at Arrowhead Marsh, ALA, Oct. 24 (RS, AASBC). A **Sedge Wren** (*Cistothorus platensis*) was reported at Half Moon Bay, SM, Oct. 28 (JA). This small wren of the same genus as our Marsh Wren inhabits the Eastern U.S. and is exceedingly rare anywhere in CA (Small, 1994). This sighting would be a 1st

county record if confirmed. The PRNS Lighthouse trees, MRN, hosted a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** (*Catharus minimus*) Oct. 1 (RS). One of these very rare fall visitors from Alaska and N. Canada had been reported from the Farallones in September.

Wood Warblers to Orioles

Again this month, Northern California enjoyed visits from many interesting Wood Warblers (see Chart). Too numerous to list individually were 32 Chestnut-sided Warblers from 7 counties, 96 Palm Warblers from 6 counties and 47 Blackpoll Warblers from 5 counties: all 3 species were seen at the Farallones as well.

Highlights were a **Yellow-throated Warbler** (*Dendroica dominica*), a species of the southern and eastern U.S., and a very rare CA transient, with most records on the coast (Small, 1994), and two **Connecticut Warblers** (*Oporornis formosus*), very rare fall transients that usually take a migratory path over the eastern U.S. from Canada. Photographs by Lillian Fujii of the one seen at PRNS, MRN, in October are on Joe Morlan's website. Another of that species was reported last month from the Farallones, where most of its sightings occur (Small, 1994). The same Brown Thrasher banded last year that stayed the winter at PRNS (TG) was recaptured at Muddy Hollow, PRNS, MRN, Oct. 11 (MP fide KB). Another Brown

Thrasher was observed at the Farallones ~Oct. 16–18 (PRBO). Red-throated Pipits are rare but regular fall transients from Asia and NW Alaska, with most records from N. CA on Point Reyes (Small, 1994). The period included one at the North Beach turnoff, PRNS, MRN, Oct. 1–4 (RS, ME, KB), 2–3 there Oct. 24 (DA), one at the Farallones ~Oct. 16–18 (PRBO), and another at Arcata, HUM, Oct. 22 (I). One adult male Summer Tanager was spotted at the Pajaro R., SCZ/MTY, Oct. 12 (DSu).

Two American Tree Sparrows were reported: one at the Farallones ~Oct. 11–13 (PRBO) and the other at Samoa, HUM, Oct. 18 (S). Clay-colored Sparrow observations were numerous, with at least 20 birds seen over HUM, MRN, MTY, SM, and SCZ counties and the Farallones. Six individual Brewer's Sparrows were reported from HUM, MRN, SM counties and the Farallones. Three Vesper Sparrows were reported: one each at the Purisima Fields, Half Moon Bay, SM, Oct. 3 (AW), in TRI county, Oct. 4 (Ha), and at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN, Oct. 11 (PS). A Black-throated Sparrow was found at Loleta, HUM, Oct. 19–26 (N, I, MOB). One Grasshopper Sparrow was discovered at Coyote Hills RP, ALA, Oct. 2 (BL, RS, AASBC). Nine Swamp Sparrows were seen over HUM, MRN, MON, and MTY counties and the Farallones, and there were 18 White-throated Sparrows reported from HUM, MRN, MTY, SCZ, counties and the Farallones.

Single Lapland Longspurs were sighted in DN, HUM, MEN, MRN, MTY, and SM counties, with a high count of 2-8 near North Beach, PRNS, MRN, Oct. 1-17 (RS, ME, MOB). Two Chestnut-colored Longspurs were found: one near North Beach, PRNS, MRN, Oct. 1 (RS), and the other at South Lake Tahoe, ED, Oct. 23 (TE).

There were single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in Seascape, SCZ, Oct. 3 (DSu), at Mt. Davidson, SF, Oct. 2 (PS), and near Ano Nuevo SP, SM, Oct. 2 (AW). The BSOL, MTY, banded a Blue Grosbeak Sept. 30 (MPRBA), and an Indigo Bunting was at the Farallones~Oct. 11-13 (PRBO). A Dickcissel, a midwestern U.S. bird and exceedingly rare as a fall transient in coastal counties of Northern California (Small, 1994), was found in DN county Oct. 6 (B). Several Bobolinks were reported: one at Tyee City, HUM, Oct. 2 (Nelson), two ~Oct.1-3 on the Farallones (PRBO), one at the Farallones~Oct. 11-13 (PRBO), and one at Arcata, HUM, Oct. 24-25 (N, R). A Rusty Blackbird found near Harkins Slough Rd., SCZ, Oct. 20 (DSu) is thought to be only the 3rd or 4th county record. Four Great-tailed Grackles at Seaside, MTY, Sept. 29, were possibly the same birds that nested at Roberts Lake last July (MPRBA) and two others were seen in Pacific Grove, MTY, Oct. 17 (MRPBA). An Orchard Oriole spotted ~Oct.1-3 on the Farallones (PRBO) rounds out the report for this fall period.

Wood Warbler Sightings

Tennessee Warbler

Sept.28-Oct.10(1-2) Carmel R., MTY
MPRBA
Sept. 28 Tyee City, HUM I
Oct. 2 Fairhaven, HUM M
Oct. 3-4 PRNS Lighthouse, MRN ME
Oct. 5 Bodega Labs, Owl Canyon, SON DN
Oct. 5 Princeton, SM AW
Oct. 8 Big Sur R. mouth, MTY SM
Oct. 10 PRNS Lighthouse, MRN SM
Oct. 18, 24 Carmel R. mouth, MTY KII, MPRBA
Oct. 20 Muir Beach, MRN DM

Nashville Warbler

Sept. 30, Oct. 3 Carmel R., MTY MPRBA
Oct. 22-24(5) Carmel R., MTY MPRBA, JMa
Oct. 25 Arcata, HUM Fr

Virginia's Warbler

Sept. 29 (2) Big Sur, MTY MPRBA

Lucy's Warbler

Oct. 26-28 Carmel R. mouth, MTY BR, AK

Northern Parula

Sept. 30-Oct. 5 Carmel R., MTY MPRBA
Oct. 8 AMSP, MTY SM
Oct. 8-15 BSOL, MTY MPRBA

Magnolia Warbler

Sept. 30 PRNS Lighthouse, MRN GR
Oct. 1 Big Sur, MTY MPRBA
Oct. 1 Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN CC fide RS
Oct. 2-5(2-5) PRNS Lighthouse, MRN RS, ME, MOB
~Oct.1-5 (5) Farallones PRBO
Oct. 5 Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, SM AW
Oct. 5 Samoa, HUM N
Oct. 4 Capitola, SCZ DSu
Oct. 5 Middle Lake, GGP, SF KHe
Oct. 5-6 Fairhaven, HUM N, I
Oct. 6-10 Carmel R., MTY MPRBA
Oct. 8 BSOL, MTY SM
Oct. 11-18 banded, BSOL, MTY MPRBA
Oct. 16 Limantour, PRNS, MRN fide ES
Oct. 16 Phipps Ranch, SM RT
Oct. 16 PRNS Lighthouse, MRN KH
~Oct. 16-18 Farallones PRBO
Oct. 17 SCZ pelagic trip DLSH
Oct. 22 Pescadero Creek, SM RT
Oct. 18-24 Carmel R., MTY KHI, AK

Cape May Warbler

Oct. 9 Lodi Lake, SJ TE

Black-throated Blue Warbler

Oct. 2 PRNS Lighthouse, MRN RS
Oct. 3 Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN KS
Oct. 4 Santa Cruz, SCZ CCu
Oct. 10 PRNS Lighthouse, MRN SM
Oct. 10 San Gregorio Creek, SM RT
~Oct. 11-15(2) Farallones PRBO
Oct. 20 Aptos, SCZ fide DSu
Oct. 22 Mt. Davidson, SF PS
Oct. 25 Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN JMo

Blackburnian Warbler

Oct. 3 Lake Merced, SF ASH
Oct. 17 Wilder Ranch SP, SCZ JD
Oct. 23-24 Carmel R. mouth, MTY BH, JMa

Yellow-throated Warbler

Oct. 25 Arcata, HUM I

Prairie Warbler

Sept. 30 PRNS Lighthouse, MRN GR
Oct. 1 Antonelli Pond, SCZ JMi
Oct. 4 Tyee City, HUM I
Oct. 7 San Gregorio, SM RI
Oct. 22 Point Pinos, MTY MPRBA

Bay-breasted Warbler

Oct. 4-6 Fairhaven, HUM I

Black-and-white Warbler

Oct. 2 Gazos Creek, SM AJ
Oct. 10 Phipps Ranch, SM MD
Oct. 12 Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN SH
Oct. 15 (2) Big Sur R. mouth, MTY MPRBA
Oct. 16-19(1-2) PRNS Fish Docks, MRN JH, GE, FB
Oct. 17 DN county B
Oct. 19 El Granda, SM CM
Oct. 22-25(1-3) Pescadero Creek, SM RT, AE
Oct. 24 Carmel R. Mouth, MTY JMa
Oct. 24 Pilarcitos Creek, SM AW

American Redstart

Oct. 2 McKinleyville, HUM I
Oct. 2 PRNS Lighthouse, MRN RS
Oct. 2 Golden Hind Inn, PRNS, MRN JBr fide RS
Oct. 34 (1-2) PRNS Lighthouse, MRN ME, KB
Oct. 3 Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN KS
Oct. 4 Davenport, SCZ DSu
Oct. 4 Santa Cruz, SCZ DSu
Oct. 4 Arcata, HUM H
~Oct. 11-15 Farallones PRBO
Oct. 14 Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN SH
Oct. 17 Carmel R., MTY MPRBA
Oct. 22 Pescadero Creek, SM RT
Oct. 23 Carmel R., MTY BH

Prothonotary Warbler

Oct. 3 San Lorenzo R., SCZ DSu

Ovenbird

Oct. 6 Rancho del Oso, SCZ DSu
Oct. 19 Carmel R., MTY AK

Northern Waterthrush

Oct. 2 Mt. Davidson, SF PS
Oct. 8 San Lorenzo R., SCZ CCu
Oct. 21 Van Damme SP, MEN DS

Connecticut Warbler

Oct. 2-5 PRNS Lighthouse, MRN EB, RS, MOB
~Oct.1-5(1) Farallones PRBO

Hooded Warbler

Oct. 2-5 PRNS Lighthouse, MRN RS, ME
Oct. 27 Aptos, SCZ fide DSu



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Save the California Least Tern

Continued from page 1

for us to be very active in order to protect the Least Tern Colony. These generous donations could not have come at a better time. And frankly, we'll need even more money if we are to succeed. For in order to get the Navy and the Service to do their job and protect the Least Tern, we may well have to go to court.

We have, in fact, just sent the Navy a "60-day notice of intent to sue". This notice is required under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). They alert an agency that they may be sued in the future and give them 60 days in which to correct the situation. Our notice tells the Navy that they have a responsibility under the ESA to protect the Least Tern and that unless they take immediate actions to provide security for the colonies during the next nesting season we will take them to court. Measures that they can take include building a better

fence around the Refuge and/or providing increased and sufficient security personnel along the border to persuade people not to trespass onto Refuge grounds.

As you probably know, litigation costs a great deal of money. We have to do it and we will but we need every one of you to help us come up with the necessary funds.

Our wonderful donors have started us in the right direction but their contributions alone won't be enough. They know this and they have challenged you our members to match their donation. So please think of sending us a donation and remember that for every dollar you send us our two friends are matching that dollar.

So a great big thank you to Afton and Alan, and, we hope, to you too. Your donations will allow us to continue our critically important efforts. }

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